

# *1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum*

..... *IN-SERVICE PROJECT:*

## **Patterns and Parameters**

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# THE REVISED CURRICULUM

This workshop will examine the structure of the 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, particularly the changes that have taken place in the social studies curriculum from 1978 to 1981. How does the 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum relate to the 1978 Interim Curriculum? In what ways is the 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum different? In what ways is it the same?

## TRANSPARENCY 1

Any curriculum can be judged on its level of prescriptiveness. One curriculum can be completely detailed in a recipe-like outline, while another can be completely "open", consisting only of a general outline of goals and objectives. Discuss the point that the 1971 curriculum was more open than the 1978 Interim Curriculum, while the 1981 curriculum is more prescriptive than the 1978 curriculum. (i.e. time elements have been included for elementary teachers, statements of objectives are more specific, there is only one social issue for each topic instead of several, the skill objectives include more specific skills.)

### Overlay 1

The 1971 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum occurred at a time when openness was seen as more desirable than structure; thus, the 1971 Curriculum was a product of its time.

### Overlay 2

The 1978 Interim Alberta Social Studies Curriculum was more structured than the 1971 Curriculum. The Downey Report suggested problems in several areas of the 1971 Curriculum and the 1978 Curriculum attempted to answer some of these problems. The building of specific curriculum resources also tended to make the structure of the 1978 Interim Curriculum more prescribed than was possible in 1971, when teachers were encouraged to become curriculum planners themselves.

### Overlay 3

The 1981 Curriculum is an attempt to refine both the order of the 1978 curriculum and the openness (the study of values, attitudes, and opinions alongside the study of facts, figures, and statistics) that Alberta Social Studies Curricula have experienced since 1971. There is direction, given through the specificity of topics, objectives and an inquiry model, yet there exists a good deal of possible scope for individual and professional choices by teachers.

## TRANSPARENCY 2 - with OVERLAY 1

There are more similarities between the 1978 and the 1981 curriculum documents than there are differences. The essence of the philosophy of social studies in Alberta is retained in the definition that is provided for social studies: "Social Studies is the school subject in which students learn to explore and, where possible, to resolve, social issues that are of public and personal concern."

### OVERLAY 2

There are many kinds of social studies curricula, and the fact that the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum remains an "issues curriculum" is very significant. This means that the focus of student inquiry is an issue rather than an event, region, or historical episode. The importance of this point is that problem-solving becomes focal rather than knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

### OVERLAY 3

In order to make sense of knowledge, to use it beneficially, certain procedures must be followed. The inclusion of an inquiry model provides some criteria to help individuals select and apply knowledge beneficially.

### OVERLAY 4

Knowledge is important through its application. While the "pure" knowledge derived through the work of social scientists working under certain conditions has importance, in order to make sound decisions people must be able to utilize knowledge.

### OVERLAY 5

One similarity between the 1978 and the 1981 curricula is the use of three basic kinds of objectives. These are value, knowledge, and skill objectives. The notion of "competing values" is still a key to inquiry. And, value objectives are still broken down into three types (Develop Understanding of Values, Develop Competencies, and Develop Attitudes), while skill objectives are still broken down into two types (Inquiry Skills and Participation Skills).

### TRANSPARENCY 3

In order to teach social studies effectively, we must decide three things. We must decide what should be taught, how it should be taught, and why it should be taught.

#### OVERLAY 1

What are we to teach? Significant social issues. As you can see, this emphasis has been retained from the 1978 curriculum.

#### OVERLAY 2

How do we teach social issues? Through learning experiences related to inquiry. The inquiry process is still a vital part of the Social Studies curriculum.

#### OVERLAY 3

Why do we teach social issues through inquiry? To develop people who are both willing and able to confront the problems of the society in which they live. By teaching social issues through inquiry, we help students learn not only how to gain knowledge, but how to make use of that knowledge in analyzing all sides of conflict. They will then become effective community, Canadian, and world citizens.

### TRANSPARENCY 4

Social issues are still the key element in the 1981 curriculum. The inquiry model found in your Curriculum Guide illustrates the basic skills that the students use during an inquiry. These skills form the nucleus of the unit, from identifying the issue through its resolution and final evaluations. Students may already have these skills or may have to develop them during the unit.

Using both intellectual and social skills, students acquire basic knowledge about the issue. They gather data, form concepts, make generalizations and explore various aspects of the issue.

Students may begin the inquiry with an established value position, but this position may change as the inquiry progresses. Students identify and clarify their own values and the values of others as they gain more knowledge about the issue.

By using the skills and the body of knowledge developed about the issue, students arrive at a well thought out value position. They are then able to answer the question raised, and if appropriate, act upon that answer in a responsible way.

### OVERLAY 1

You can see how this sequence accomplishes the WHAT, HOW and WHY that were set out in the main objective of the curriculum.

- WHAT? - the facts, concepts and generalizations  
related to significant social issues
- HOW? - through inquiry and participation
- WHY? - for effective citizenship

### OVERLAY 2

This sequence of activities is so central to the curriculum that it has formed the basis of the curriculum objectives. Accordingly, the curriculum has knowledge objectives, skill objectives, and value objectives. These three types of objectives are stated in general terms in the first section of the Curriculum Guide, and in specific terms in the topic descriptions for each grade level.

### TRANSPARENCY 5

There are several differences between the 1978 curriculum and the 1981 curriculum. Some are minor and some are major. Some of the minor changes are cosmetic, editing changes. In effect, an attempt has been made to edit the 1981 curriculum using rigorous standards. However, some major changes have been made in the 1981 curriculum.

### OVERLAY 1

One change is that the "general value issue" has been eliminated in the 1981 curriculum. Many teachers were confused by the inclusion of this value issue in the 1978 curriculum and, in general, it was felt that the issue did not contribute to the ease in teaching the topic.

### OVERLAY 2

Where the 1978 curriculum contained several specific value issues, the 1981 curriculum contains only one social issue. The reduction of social issues to one represents an attempt to ensure that prescribed issues are broad enough to have lasting significance.



### OVERLAY 3

In the 1978 curriculum, thirteen core concepts structured the knowledge component of the curriculum. These concepts have been eliminated and the concepts for each grade level include a variety of different social studies concepts.

### OVERLAY 4

Scope and sequence charts have been added to the 1981 curriculum to show the extent of Canadian and global curriculum content throughout all twelve grades.

### OVERLAY 5

Included in the 1981 curriculum are a number of specific criteria for moral reasoning and/or decision-making.

### OVERLAY 6

In the 1978 curriculum, each grade contained an overview. This has been eliminated in the 1981 curriculum.

### OVERLAY 7

The 1978 curriculum provided for approximately 50% of the total prescribed content in Canadian studies. The 1981 curriculum provides for an additional 10%, up to 60%, of Canadian studies.

## TRANSPARENCY 6

In general, there is a greater specificity in the 1981 curriculum. These changes to make the curriculum more specific can be seen in the manner in which the value, knowledge, and skills objectives are laid out in the curriculum guide.

### OVERLAY 1

Value objectives are divided into (1) Develop understanding of values; (2) Develop competencies; and, (3) Develop attitudes. In the 1981 curriculum, examples are provided for each type of value objective.

### OVERLAY 2

Knowledge Objectives, in the 1981 curriculum, contain only one generalization as opposed to three or four; a number of specific concepts;

## OVERLAY 2 Continued

and questions to guide inquiry. The 1978 curriculum listed three or four generalizations with appropriate concepts for the students to develop, but contained no specific indicators of factual knowledge.

## OVERLAY 3

While there have been some cosmetic changes in the way the skills objectives are given, generally they remain the same. However, not all are given the same emphasis, thus encouraging teachers to be flexible in applying the Process of Social Inquiry.

## TRANSPARENCY 7

Several changes have been made in the chart "A Process for Social Inquiry". First, participation skills have been added to the middle of the chart. These show a number of concomitant skills that should be attained through the process of social inquiry. Second, the inquiry steps are numbered to correspond to the particular inquiry skills given in each topic. Third, the chart in the 1981 curriculum shows the inquiry ending with the evaluation of the decision and the process. In 1978, the interpretation of the chart was that the inquirer would go around in circles forever.

## TRANSPARENCY 8

### 1. PRESCRIBED RESOURCES

Each grade level has prescribed resources available from the School Book Branch at 40 per cent discount from the regular price. There will be at least three per grade, so that material is available for each prescribed topic. At each grade level, a number of "recommended" resources are also available from the School Book Branch at 15 per cent discount from the regular list price.

### 2. TEACHING UNITS

The TEACHING UNITS have been provided by Alberta Education. These are quite detailed, and follow the inquiry pattern discussed earlier. Of course you are still free to develop your own units on the topic, and these prepared UNITS may give you some ideas or examples. They are examples of how to teach a prescribed topic, and are not themselves prescribed for use by Alberta teachers.

### 3. ALBERTA HERITAGE LEARNING RESOURCES PROJECT

Another rich source of teaching materials comes from the Alberta Heritage Learning Resources Project. Of these, the KANATA KITS are probably the most familiar. We will come back to them in a moment.



#### 4. MONOGRAPHS

Finally, a series of monographs designed to provide you with general information related to teaching Social Studies is becoming available. The first of these is a HANDBOOK FOR UNIT PLANNERS, which should be of help to you in building your own teaching units from the guidelines provided in the Curriculum Guide. The second is TEACHING THE ELECTIVE PORTION OF ALBERTA SOCIAL STUDIES, which will be available in Fall, 1981.

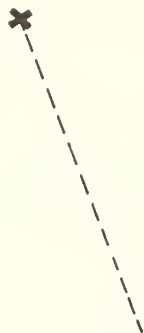
### TRANSPARENCY 9

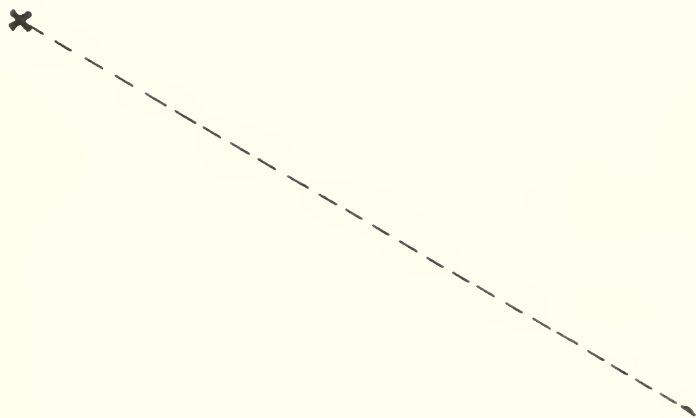
An important resource is the set of Alberta Heritage Materials. Sixteen KANATA KITS have been prepared specifically to support this curriculum. They are intended to be used with a specific grade and topic. Like the Teaching Units, they are not prescribed, but demonstrate one way to teach prescribed topics. A great deal of confusion exists on this point but the KANATA KITS and TEACHING UNITS are optional support materials and should be modified to maximize their usefulness in individual classrooms.

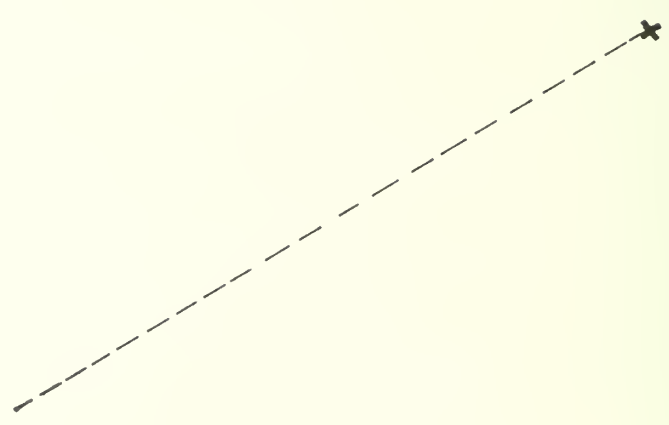
The JUNIOR ATLAS OF ALBERTA and the RELIEF MODEL can be used with any grade level where they suit the objectives of your unit. However, the JUNIOR ATLAS was distributed to elementary schools only, and is probably most functional for grades 4, 5, and 6. Social Studies teachers may also make good use of the FLORA AND FAUNA KITS.

The remaining three (BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS, WESTERN CANADIAN LITERATURE FOR YOUTH, ALBERTA LITERATURE) are anthologies or collections of stories, poems, and articles touching on many aspects of our life in Alberta. They are an excellent source of material and can be used in a wide variety of ways. The BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS are intended for elementary students, and the WESTERN CANADIAN LITERATURE collection is for junior high and senior high students. The adult collection may offer some material to your high school students, and also some background reading for yourself.

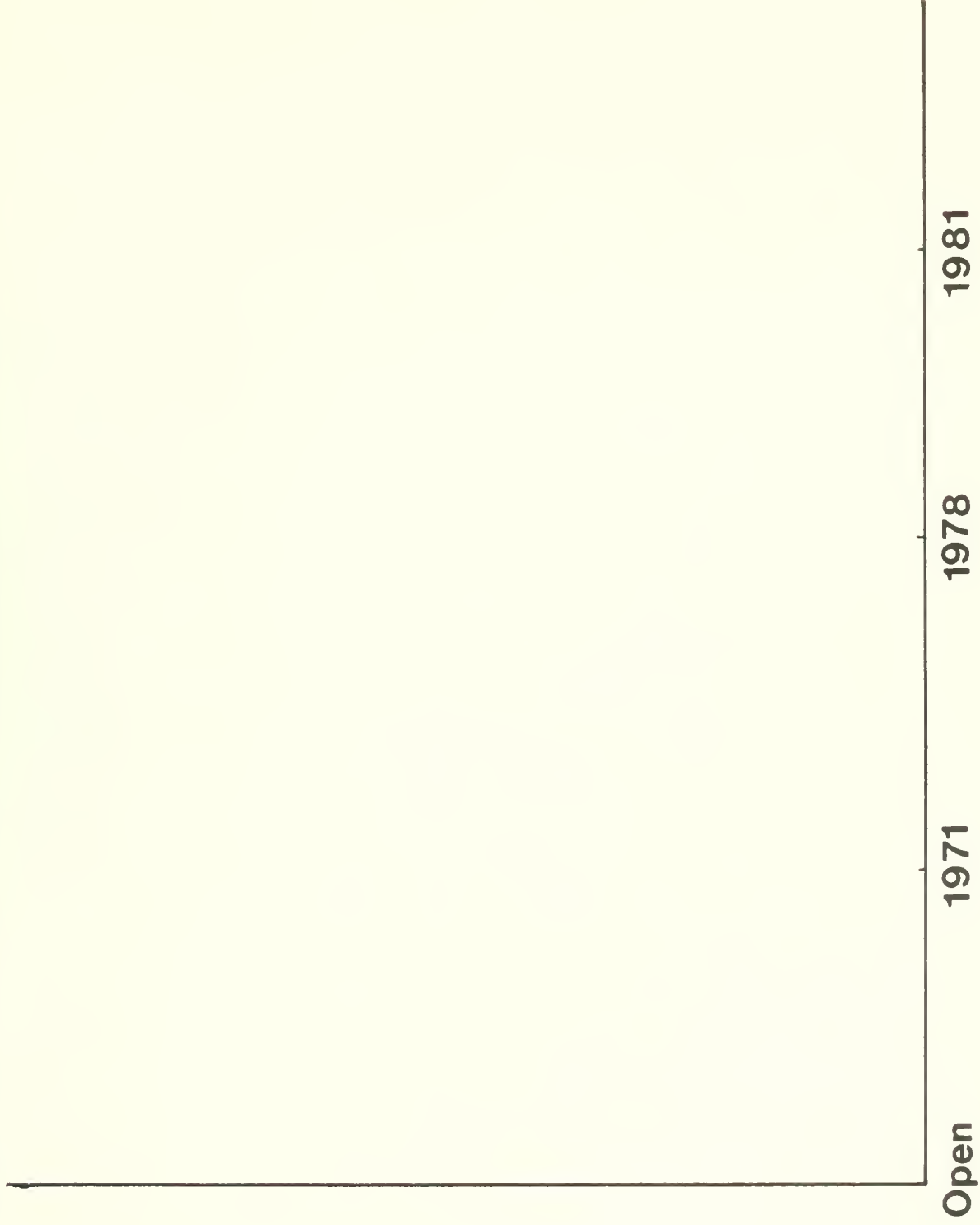
The most significant resources, however, will be the TEACHING UNITS, the prescribed resources available from the School Book Branch, and the KANATA KITS distributed by the Alberta Heritage Learning Resources Project. These three basic resources will provide you with materials to develop each topic in the curriculum. You will probably want to add to them, but they are a good starting point. Good Luck!







Prescribed





5. THE ORGANIZATION OF OBJECTIVES REMAINS UNCHANGED.

4. KNOWLEDGE REMAINS SEEN AS INTERDISCIPLINARY.

3 THE INQUIRY MODEL, "A PROCESS FOR SOCIAL INQUIRY",  
REMAINS TO GUIDE INQUIRY.

2. THE ALBERTA SOCIAL STUDIES REMAINS AN ISSUES CURRICULUM.

1. THE DEFINITION OF SOCIAL STUDIES REMAINS THE SAME.



<b>IMPORTANT SIMILARITIES IN THE 1978 AND THE 1981 CURRICULUM</b>					

**NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNITY, CANADIAN, AND  
WORLD CITIZENSHIP**

# **LEARNING EXPERIENCES RELATED TO INQUIRY**

## **SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL ISSUES**

**WHAT IS TO BE DONE?**

**HOW DO WE DO IT?**

**WHY IS IT TO BE DONE?**



SKILL

KNOWLEDGE

VALUE

HOW  
WHAT

WHY

USE THE SKILLS CARRIED IN THE  
SOCIAL INQUIRY MODEL TO

ACQUIRE BASIC KNOWLEDGE  
WHICH IS USED TO

ARRIVE AT A VALUE POSITION  
AND

ANSWER THE QUESTION  
IN THE ISSUE

CARRY OUT RESPONSIBLE  
SOCIAL ACTION

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1978 AND THE 1981 CURRICULUM

1978

1981

1. A GENERAL VALUE ISSUE WAS INCLUDED.
1. NO GENERAL VALUE ISSUE.



2. SEVERAL SPECIFIC VALUE ISSUES.
2. ONLY ONE SOCIAL ISSUE PER TOPIC.

3. A "SPIRAL" OF THIRTEEN CORE CONCEPTS. 3. NO "SPIRAL" OF CORE CONCEPTS.

- 4. NO SCOPE AND SEQUENCE CHARTS.
- 4. SCOPE AND SEQUENCE CHARTS FOR  
CANADIAN AND GLOBAL CONTENT.

5. NO CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING VALUES.      5. SPECIFIC VALUE TESTS PROVIDE CRITERIA  
FOR MAKING VALUE DECISIONS.

6. OVERVIEW WAS PROVIDED FOR EACH  
GRADE.

6. THE OVERVIEW FOR EACH GRADE HAS BEEN  
DROPPED.

7. CANADIAN STUDIES COMPRISE 50%. 7. CANADIAN STUDIES COMPRISE 60%.

SKILL  
OBJECTIVES

STRUCTURED AROUND THE STEPS  
OF THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL  
INQUIRY.

STRUCTURED AROUND THE STEPS OF THE  
PROCESS OF SOCIAL INQUIRY, BUT MORE  
FLEXIBILITY IN APPLICATION IS  
ENCOURAGED.

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO DEVELOP INTERPRETATIONS OF THREE OR FOUR CONCEPTS AND GENERALIZATIONS.	STUDENTS ARE ASKED TO GAIN AN UNDER- STANDING OF ONE GENERALIZATION, A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC CONCEPTS, AND ARE GIVEN A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE ACQUISITION OF FACTS.
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VALUE

OBJECTIVES

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF VALUE  
RELATED AREAS (USUALLY 3

OR 4)

STUDENT GROWTH AREAS ARE DIVIDED INTO

- (1) DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF VALUES;
- (2) DEVELOP COMPETENCIES; AND
- (3) DEVELOP ATTITUDES. EXAMPLES ARE

GIVEN IN EACH AREA OF VALUE

OBJECTIVES.

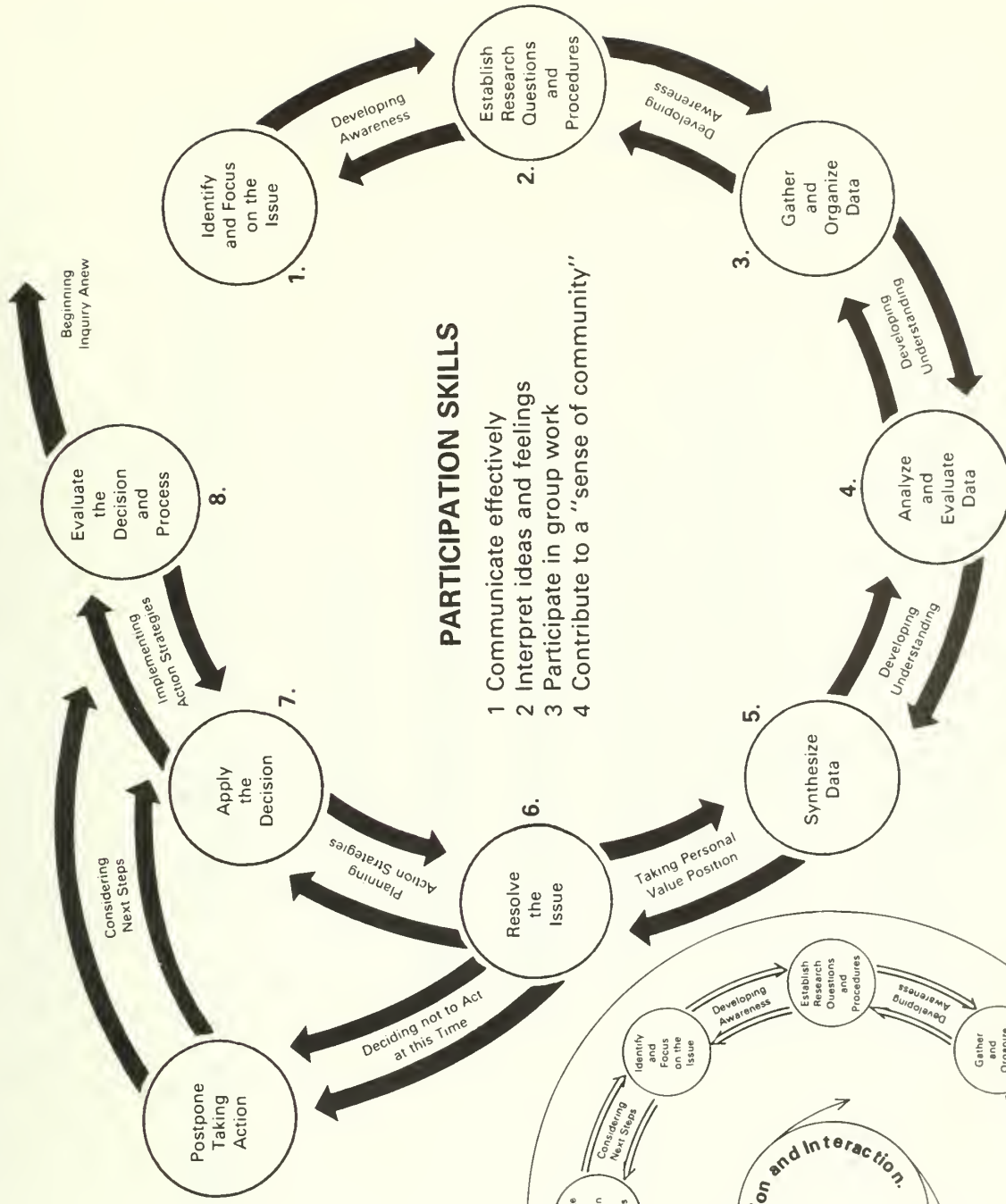
# AREA 1978 CURRICULUM EXAMPLES 1981 CURRICULUM EXAMPLES

## 1978 CURRICULUM EXAMPLES

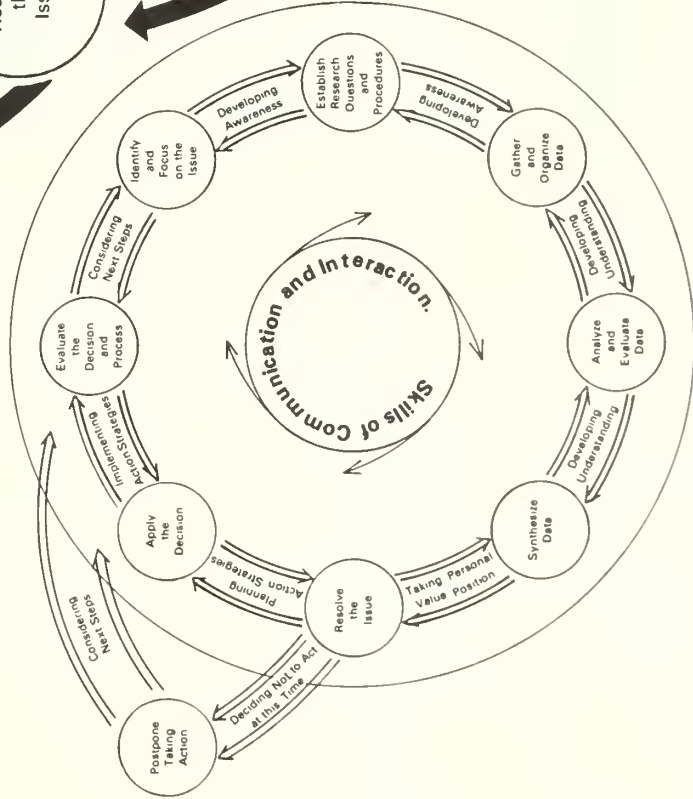
## 1981 CURRICULUM EXAMPLES

# A Process for Social Inquiry

AFTER



BEFORE



# **CURRICULUM SUPPORT MATERIAL**

**3 TO 10 RESOURCES  
PRESCRIBED PER GRADE**

**TEACHING UNITS**

**HERITAGE PROJECT MATERIALS**

**MONOGRAPHS**

# **ALBERTA HERITAGE PROJECT**

## **KANATA KITS**

**JUNIOR ATLAS OF ALBERTA**

**RELIEF MODEL OF ALBERTA**

**ALBERTA HERITAGE BOOKS  
FOR YOUNG READERS**

**WESTERN CANADIAN LITERATURE  
FOR YOUTH**

**ALBERTA LITERATURE  
FOR SENIOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS**

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**For Reference**

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